

SYNCHRONIZED SWIMMING

Freedom Valley team makes quite a splash

Special to The Mercury
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PHOENIXVILLE – Members of the Freedom Valley synchronized swim team had a strong showing against teams from five other states during the East Zone Senior Championships, held last month in Buffalo, N.Y.

The Freedom Valley team, based out of the Phoenixville Area YMCA, competed against rivals from around Pennsylvania as well as others from, New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts and Connecticut.

Coach Jennifer Hatt said she was pleased with the girls' performance, which improved by more than five points from previous showings. Competitors at the round included returning team members and assistant coaches, Jessie Adamiak of Paoli, and Heather Johnson of Phoenixville, along with Sarah Ferris and Haley Richter of Berwyn, Natalia Mujica of Chester Springs, and Isabelle Lammers, a Swedish exchange student attending Great Valley High School this year.

The team is now gearing up to host the Mid-Atlantic Association Championships, set for April 25-26 at the Phoenixville Area YMCA on Pothouse Road. Participating teams in addition to the hosts will be the York Synchro-ettes of York, the Pennsbury Falconettes of Fairless Hills, and Cumberland Valley of Mechanicsburg.

The newest members of the team performed well at last month's East Zone Invitational in Hamden, Conn. against teams

from Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York, New Hampshire and elsewhere in Pennsylvania.

Lily Cremers of Pottstown, Marissa Olalde of Phoenixville, and Alexandria Poteet of Chester Springs took fifth place for their trio in the 11-12 year old Intermediate Division. Erin Boring and Kathryn Sewick of Phoenixville, along with Tess Cremers of Pottstown, took fourth place in the 13-15 year old Intermediate Division.

In addition, Poteet and Lily Cremers took seventh for their duet in the 11-12 age group; Boring and Tess Cremers won the gold medal for their first place duet in the 13-15 division.

The Intermediate team, which included the two trios, took fifth place for its routine.

This is the third year for the growing team, which this year has expanded to 20 members and includes members from ages 7-18.

Synchronized swimming involves the performance of dance, gymnastics and swimming movements choreographed to music. It can include lifts, spins, throws and various underwater positions, some of which are done upside down, many in the deep water and all without the swimmer touching the bottom of the pool. Swimmers compete in various categories including team, a routine with 4-8 swimmers, duet, trio and solo. They are divided by ability/experience level into Intermediate (newer swimmers) and Age Group (more experienced swimmers), and by age, based on

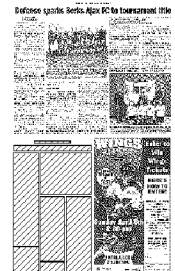
the age of the oldest swimmer in the group, into ages 10 and under, 11-12, 16-17, and 18-19.

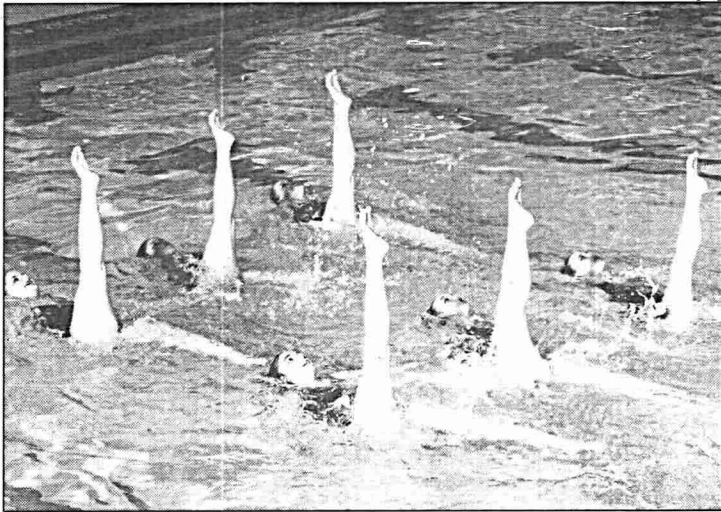
The Freedom Valley team also garnered numerous awards at the recent Have-a-Heart outing, an annual competition held in Laurel, Md.

In the team division, the 13-15 team of Renee Johnson, Andrea Stock and Erin Weber, all of Phoenixville, along with Mujica, took a silver medal for their routine to music from the movie "Bettlejuice." The 10 and under Intermediate team of Elise Alexander of Collegeville, Hannah and Heidi Atlas of Malvern, and Marissa Olalde of Phoenixville, also took silver. The 13-15 Intermediate team of Erin Boring and Kathryn Sewick of Phoenixville, along with Tess and Lily Cremers of Pottstown, took fourth.

In the trios, Emily Boring of Phoenixville, along with Weber and Mujica, won the gold medal in the 13-15 age bracket, Erin Boring, Sewick and Tess Cremers also won gold in the 13-15 Intermediate Division. Alexander, Olalde and Heidi Atlas took fourth in the 10 and under Intermediate.

In the duets, Emily Boring and Weber won gold in the 13-15 group, as did Stock and Johnson in the 11-12 division. Olalde and Alexander were the silver medalists in the 10-and-under Intermediate Division. Erin Boring and Tess Cremers took fourth in the 13-15 Intermediate Division, and Hannah Atlas and Lily Cremers took eighth in the 11-12 Intermediate Division. ▽





Members of the Freedom Valley synchronized swimming team execute a ballet leg pattern during the recent East Zone Senior Championships in Buffalo, N.Y.